



Wales Office
Swyddfa Cymru

Ref: 026SOS25

Rt Hon Jo Stevens MP
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Mike Hedges MS

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17 April 2025

Dear Mike,

LAYING OF BILINGUAL STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

Thank you for your letter of 6 March regarding the laying of bilingual statutory instruments in Parliament. You asked me to consider the position outlined in my letter of 15 October 2024 further in light of section 156 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 (GoWA). I would firstly like to reiterate my support for the Welsh language and ensuring that information and services can be readily accessed through the medium of Welsh.

In my previous letter I noted it was the position of the House of Commons Procedure Committee that whilst there was no procedural bar against the laying of bilingual statutory instruments this was only in instances where the enabling power in the relevant Act required it. My officials have confirmed with the Journal Office that this is indeed their position that without such a requirement, the relevant statutory instrument could only be laid in Parliament in English. I do not believe that Parliament would consider that section 156 of GoWA amounts to a requirement that subordinate legislation be laid bilingually. Rather it provides that in instances in which the legislation is bilingual (including in Acts of the Senedd or statutory instruments), the English and Welsh texts have equal standing.

You are of course correct that instruments containing Welsh language text are frequently laid in Parliament in absence of a requirement. This often reflects section 156, in that where UK legislation modifies bilingual legislation made by the Senedd or Welsh Ministers it amends both the English and Welsh texts, recognising that they have equal standing in law. Such modifications are however able to be laid because they are accommodated within otherwise English only instruments in the form accepted by Parliament.



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Yours sincerely,

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